

March 18, 2023

## Testimony to the Senate Public Health and Welfare Committee

NAME: **Leslie D. Mark**

TITLE: **Kansas Citizen / Voter**

EMAIL ADDRESS: **ldmark61@gmail.com**

BILL NUMBER: **HB2141, *Requiring custodial and non-custodial parents to cooperate with child support enforcement programs for food assistance eligibility and disqualifying such parents from food assistance for being delinquent in support payments.***

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: **Opponent**

ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: **Written Only**

Dear Chair Gossage & Members of the Committee,

HB 2141 is yet another Republican draft of boilerplate legislation, showing up across the country, that does not match the need and story of hunger in Kansas. This bill would do incalculable harm to our youngest and most vulnerable Kansans, hard hearted and creating fresh pain for children already traumatized by collapsing families.

Even before the COVID-19 pandemic, the rate of hunger and poverty in Kansas was far too high. In 2019, more than 120,000 children lived in households that struggled with hunger, including 60% of those living in poverty.

Child Nutrition Programs are profoundly important programs with well-documented benefits to the health and well-being of children and their families. Close to 80% of people who participate in SNAP are in fact either working or can't work because they are only children or older adults (60+) or have disabilities.

Hunger is an economic condition and in Kansas we have failed to mitigate food insecurity because of harsh policies that haven't delivered a full employment economy or adequate wages / incomes. SNAP boosts local economies. Ending hunger is a goal that Kansans fully support and recent polls have consistently found voters think the we are not doing enough to solve this painful, debilitating challenge.

Senator Gossage, you and the committee should be developing, with assistance from the private sector – business, labor and charitable – and knowledgeable constituents, more efforts that will bolster government's leadership in alleviating hunger. Clearly, though, that cannot take the place of the government's most steadfast commitment, thoughtful policies and Federal investments to end it. You should not be in the business of further roiling already stressed families. Please vote no on HB 2141 as written.

Leslie D. Mark

Mission Hills, HD 25 / Sen 7